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## Locating Portuguese hindus: transnationality in urban settings

*Localizando os hindus portugueses: a transnacionalidade nas cidades*

*Localiser les hindoues portugais: transnationalité dans les villes*

*Localización de los hindúes portugueses: transnacionalidad en las ciudades*

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## LOCATING PORTUGUESE HINDUS Transnationality in urban settings

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**Abstract** This paper presents the case of Portuguese Hindu Gujarati families in Lisbon and in Leicester. It aims to corroborate the increasing importance of the urban referential in transnationality studies. Recent approaches in transnationality studies include the significance of cities for transmigrants under a variety of levels. One of them is social mobility. This paper focuses specifically in motility, and it confirms, through ethnography, that beyond the classical national referential, the urban referential plays a central role for migration decisions. Cities confirm what transnationality scholars have been aware of: that migrants live and move between cities.

**Keywords** transnationality, motility, urban contexts, Hindu Diaspora.

**Resumo** Este artigo apresenta o caso das famílias hindus-gujaratis portuguesas em Lisboa e em Leicester. Procura corroborar a importância crescente que o referencial urbano tem vindo a ganhar nos estudos transnacionais. Recentes abordagens nos estudos de transnacionalidade incluem a importância das cidades para os transmigrantes a vários níveis. Um deles é o da mobilidade social. Este artigo foca especificamente a motilidade e confirma, através da etnografia, que, além do referente clássico nacional, o referente urbano joga um papel central nas decisões de emigrar. As cidades confirmam assim aquilo de que os especialistas em transnacionalidade vêm dando conta: que os migrantes vivem e movem-se entre cidades.

**Palavras-chave** transnacionalidade, motilidade, contextos urbanos, diáspora hindu.

**Résumé** Cet article présente le cas des familles hindoues-gujarâti portugaises à Lisbonne et à Leicester. Il cherche à corroborer l'importance croissante du référentiel urbain dans les études transnationales. De récentes approches dans les études sur la transnationalité incluent l'importance des villes pour les transmigrants à plusieurs niveaux. L'un d'eux est celui de la mobilité sociale. Cet article est axé en particulier sur la motilité et confirme grâce à l'ethnographie que, au-delà du référent national classique, le référent urbain joue un rôle central dans la décision d'émigrer. Les villes confirment ainsi ce dont les experts en transnationalité se sont rendu compte : que les migrants vivent et se déplacent de ville en ville.

**Mots-clés** transnationalité, motilité, contextes urbains, diaspora hindoue.

**Resumen** Este artículo presenta el caso de las familias Hindu-Gujarati portuguesas en Lisboa y en Leicester. Procura corroborar la importancia creciente que el referencial urbano ha ganado en los estudios transnacionales. Abordajes recientes en los estudios de transnacionalidad incluyen la importancia de las ciudades para los transmigrantes en varios niveles. Uno de ellos es el de la movilidad social. Este artículo se enfoca específicamente en la motilidad y confirma, a través de la

etnografía, que además del referente clásico nacional, el referente urbano juega un papel central en las decisiones de emigrar. Las ciudades confirman así, aquello que los especialistas en transnacionalidad se vienen dando cuenta: que los migrantes viven y se mueven entre ciudades.

Palabras-clave transnacionalidad, motilidad, contextos urbanos, diáspora hindu.

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## Introduction

Social sciences have studied migrant mobility in different ways over the last decades. The first part of this paper presents academic contributions on Hindu Diaspora and transnationality, and on mobility studies in order to highlight the potential of the links between them.

The analysis of the Hindu Diaspora has been shaped by the study of Hindu communities living in various cities in the United Kingdom (Vertovec, 2001; Ballard, 1994; Coward, 2000; Ali, Kalra, and Sayyid, 2006, among other). The literature about the Hindu Diaspora focuses mostly on how religious communities settle in and adapt to destination countries, and how they maintain relations with their countries of origin. Diaspora studies also provide rich analyses of the links between caste and social mobility (Rosser, 1966; Sharma, 1977; Osella and Osella, 1999). However, in the analysis of the Hindu Diaspora, which necessarily looks at movement between cities in host countries, the implications for families' social mobility has been neglected, hence a full picture of the dynamic reality of these populations is incomplete.

The Hindu Portuguese informants I have worked with since the year of 2000 provide information that handle issues which are central to mobility studies, transnationality and Diaspora, urban studies, as well as to other more specific areas of study, including post-colonialism and cosmopolitanism. In other words, engaging in the ethnography of the lives of these families means one must bridge various areas of study.

Considering mobility studies, there are at least three, not necessarily contradictory approaches to the subject. Some studies focus on the evolution of communication technologies and their contribution to urban planning, including the improvement of and access to the broad range of urban services (e.g., Walton 2006). Another perspective associates mobility with the movement of migrants between country of origin and destination, particularly since the 1970s (Bassand and Kaufmann, 2000). This type of approaches have a great potential for the analysis of transnationality and Diaspora. Studies of Diaspora make greater use of theories emerging from cultural and post-colonial studies and although they take on board the concept of transnationality, they tend to overlook the inherent mobility of social actors. A third approach looks at mobility as a means to social or class mobility (e.g. Bourdieu, 1979; Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1993; Grácio, 1997).

Bassant and Kaufmann point out that the idea of mobility was first promoted in the 1920s in the United States as part of the ideology of social equality, but it only made an appearance in the academic sphere from the 1960s onward in studies about social mobility and migrations (Bassant and Kaufmann, 2000: 129). An interpretation of the historical evolution of the issue of mobility was presented by Schuler et al. (1997), a work which is a first step in what is now a long trajectory of studies on mobility processes.

In the Portuguese literature, a recent interdisciplinary study, which examines how mobility is produced, is: Renato do Carmo and José Alberto Simões, *A Produção das Mobilidades. Espacialidades e Trajectos* (2009), where a variety of approaches are gathered, from more classical perspectives about migrant mobility connected with social mobility (Delicado, 2009), to mobility in tourism (Cordeiro 2009) and residential mobility (Vidal, 2009).

Hannah, Scheller and Urry (2006) report on how studies on migration, Diaspora and transnational citizenship have inspired new social science analyses on the static categories of nation, ethnicity, community, place and state, which are transforming these concepts. The phenomena of movement and displacement can now be seen from a different point of view, notably allowing a greater focus on *particulars* (Abu-Lughod, 1991: 158) and thereby going beyond the classic distinction between places and people. It is then important to note the role of transportation. Divall and Bond (2003) document the relationship between urban growth and the development of transport. In this context, mobility means social mobility. Urban transport planning was guided by the goal of satisfying systemic mobility needs. The view that public transport was a vital means to effective urban mobility climaxed in the 1970s, and declined after the oil crisis, the economic outsourcing, and the rise of unemployment in Europe (Bassant and Kaufmann, 2000: 130). It should be noted that one of the main questions addressed while studying mobility is the different levels of access for social actors, therefore one of the most examined themes in mobility studies has been inequality and potential social mobility (Bonnet and Desjeux, 2000: 18).

Frequently, those three different approaches combine. Studies about the links between transportation development, inequality and territorial mobility provide a better understanding of the technical aspects of territorial mobility (Piron, 2000: 11), but they tend to neglect qualitative issues. Other works contribute both to mobility studies in social sciences and to the development of urban planning studies, among which I would highlight the contribution by Kaufmann, et al. (2004). This work is a report that makes repeated reference to the concept of *motility*. The authors agree that spatial mobility is less a concept than a fluid notion in the sense that it encompasses several different phenomena which are not necessarily interconnected. They therefore propose the concept of *motility*, which refers to the mobility potential of any given social actor (Kaufmann et al., 2004: 26). The concept allows one to speak about the territorial and social implications of the technical evolution of transport and communication systems. The authors propose this alternative because they observe that mobility, which focuses on movement, does not allow one to speak about the *proclivity* for movement, or about the *swiftness* in acquiring the

potential for mobility. *Motility* is then defined as the way in which an individual or group develops a “realm of possibility” (following Bourdieu) and uses to advance with mobility projects.

For Kaufmann and his colleagues, *motility* has three essential dimensions: accessibility, competences, and appropriation. On this view, *motility* is systemic, and access to conditions for mobility of some groups or individuals leads others to seek the same conditions for their own mobility. In their conclusions, Kaufman et al. refer to the existence of an unstable relationship between territorial planning and the *motility* of actors. *Motility* allows simultaneously for participation *and* disengagement; put differently, as it is about possibilities, there is always a good chance that people do not move at all. In this sense, *motility* is ultimately mobility as a value. Research on Diasporas and transnationality can only benefit from recent studies of mobility, including those about urban planning. The millions of immigrants living in Europe’s “global cities” (Sassen, 2001) provide opportunities for ethnographic studies with a strong theoretical component (empirical study and theory are not often brought together). I now turn to a specific case study that illustrates how mobility, transnationality and Diaspora studies may be connected.

This paper proceeds with a narrative of a particular journey in three parts: first, it offers a brief historical overview of Portuguese Hindu migrations; second, it analyses interurban travel as multi-reasoned mobility (driven by religion, residential mobility, and ultimately social mobility); and it ends with an analysis of how the transnationality approach gain from paying more attention to how the urban rather than the national dimension is highly significant — as it certainly is for Portuguese-Hindu transnationals.

### **The Portuguese Hindu Gujaratis: housing and migration**

The Hindu communities residing in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon has been studied from various angles. Although the migration routes of this community were examined by various scholars (Malheiros, 1996; Bastos e Bastos, 2001; Lourenço, 2009; Cachado, 2012), I set the stage with a brief summary of the main routes used.

Most Hindu families in Portugal are Gujaratis. They participated in the key Hindu-Gujarati migration, from India to East Africa. Some of these Gujarati families came from Diu, which — with Goa and Daman — was a Portuguese colony until 1961. Most Diu families that migrated to East Africa chose Mozambique, another Portuguese colony that gained independence in 1975. The majority of Hindu families residing in Portugal migrated from Mozambique to Portugal in the early 1980s in the context of civil war in Mozambique (Bastos e Bastos, 2001). They settled in residential zones with very specific patterns of access to housing by different families and castes.

Initially, the main locations were the Quinta da Holandesa and Quinta da Vitória neighborhoods. Bastos’s study of the social organization of households was a founding ethnographic examination of Hindus in Portugal (Bastos, 1990). Quinta da Holandesa was located in the Vale do Areeiro, an informal self-building settlement

in a central area of Lisbon. In the mid-1990s, after it was demolished, the families were resettled in Olaias and in the Armador housing estate, one of the many housing estates located in Marvila, where people who resided in several of Lisbon's so-called slums were resettled. Most housing estates in Marvila are inhabited by Portuguese of poor rural backgrounds (Fonseca, 1990) and migrants from Portugal's former African colonies.

Portuguese Hindus settled also in the Quinta da Vitória neighborhood, another self-building informal settlement, located in the borough of Portela, Loures, near Lisbon Airport. The relocation process was prolonged (20 years) and resettlement was made in various estates, though a hundred families needed to find housing alternatives. Hindu families can be found in other areas of Great Lisbon. Many who came to Portugal in the early 1980s also went to live in estates in Santo António dos Cavaleiros (Lourenço, 2009), in flats they purchased themselves. There are also many Hindu families in other municipalities around Lisbon, although more dispersed than in the described areas.

Before they migrated to Portugal, Portuguese Hindu families lived mostly in Mozambique, after waves of migration from India to that country between the early twentieth century and after the Second World War. The studies examining the destination of this first wave were undertaken by historians (Rita-Ferreira, 1985), sociologists (Ávila and Alves, 1993; Dias, 2009) and economists (Leite, 1993). These and other studies allowed scholars to understand the background of Hindus currently living in Portugal. However, this historical context is preceded by another broader and older movement. Over the centuries, there were regular migrations from South Asia to East Africa given maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean (Pearson, 2001). All the same, Portuguese colonialism had a specific influence on families residing in Diu (Gujarat, India) that chose to migrate to Mozambique. People also migrated from Goa to Mozambique and Portugal, but Goan families were mainly Catholic (Rosales, 2009) and their migratory aims were different from those of the people coming from Diu. Additionally, Diu is geographically and culturally wedged in the state of Gujarat, so migrations from there resemble those originating in other Gujarati cities, such as Porbandar and Rajkot.

Turning back to the Hindu residents in the informal settlement of Quinta da Vitória, this is the Portuguese Hindu Gujarati group that has undergone most socio-political change. In 1993 Quinta da Vitória became a part of the Special Rehousing Program (Programa Especial de Realojamento, PER), which covered most informal settlements in Greater Lisbon and Oporto. The PER aimed to rehouse most families living in shanty-towns in housing estates, but the program was only half-way completed. In 2002, 30 Hindu families (of a total of 180) living in Quinta da Vitória were resettled into a housing estate, the Dr. Alfredo Bensaúde estate, located precisely in front of Quinta da Vitória. This enabled the resettled families and those waiting for resettlement to maintain contact and to keep their daily routines. In this case, then, the resettlement did not introduce a dramatic spatial segregation, which is what usually happens because the informal settlements of Greater Lisbon slums were normally more central than the housing estates where families were resettled (Cachado, 2011). Because the resettlement program did not resettle all

families, some Hindu families in Quinta da Vitória opted to migrate to Britain. Overall, from the beginning of the 2000s, many Hindu families who had been living in Portugal for decades but had relatives in the United Kingdom began to seek out better employment and housing alternatives there.

In sum, families that kept waiting for a housing solution for about 15 years held their expectations and did not move “upwards” (to take the jargon of social mobility studies). International mobility for them emerged as an alternative to the neverending sotry of the rehousing process.

Housing difficulties faced by the Hindu residents of Quinta da Vitória accelerated a third wave of migration among these families, since housing procedures for migrants in the United Kingdom are not as bureaucratized as they are in the Portuguese PER program. Migrant populations who settled in Britain after East African countries independences faced diverse urban policies over the decades. Most analyses of housing access and conditions in British South Asian communities focus on social integration and inter-ethnic relations with other, previously established, populations (see, for example, Hill, 1969; Smith and Whalley, 1975; Shaw, 1982; Davies, 1984; Robinson, 1986; Rex, 1988; Stopes-Roe and Cochrane, 1991). Like many other South Asian groups, Hindu Gujaratis remained linked by family and caste ties with other Diaspora groups. This calls to mind Conradson and McKay’s *translocal subjectivities* (2007: 168) and Thieme’s *multi-local livelihoods* (2008: 52). Thieme stresses that many transnationals live in more than one household. This is certainly an established trend among older Hindus, many of whom often live half of the year in Europe with their children and grandchildren, and the other half back in India.<sup>1</sup>

Before they migrate to the United Kingdom, Hindu Portuguese families inform themselves about housing policies and immigration facilities. However, it should be emphasized that this third wave of migration has been prompted by other factors which affect families with *and* without housing problems in Portugal. The existence of a livelier job market and a strong community network based on religion, are also weighty considerations for those migrating to Britain.

### Hindu mobility in urban contexts

Hindu families in Britain that seek better living conditions tend to move between cities rather than opt for another Diaspora country. Analyses of South Asian transnationalism that focus on urban settings are rare, but not entirely new (Ashutosh, 2008). When examining the context affecting Hindu Portuguese families from Quinta da Vitória who migrated to the United Kingdom because of housing needs, I chose issues related to the concept of mobility for various reasons. Hindu Portuguese urban mobility (in the sense of territorial movement) in Great Lisbon area was prompted by daily needs other than commuting, principally

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1 Which in turn complicates the definition of census numbers.

family visits, and movements related to the Hindu calendar, which is rich in ceremonies and rituals performed in formal and informal places of worship throughout the Great Lisbon. These events take place in all neighborhoods where Hindu Portuguese families live, as well as in the different *mandir* (temple): Rhada-Krishna in Lumiar, Shiva in Santo António dos Cavaleiros, and Jai Ambé, in Quinta da Vitória.

During the most important festivities of the Hindu calendar such as Navratri, Janmashtami, and Holi<sup>2</sup>, virtually all families living in Great Lisbon go to temple. Weddings outside Great Lisbon mobilize family members found in cities throughout the Diaspora — in India, Mozambique, and the United Kingdom. An obvious sign of the frequency of such travels is the proliferation of transport companies managed by members of the South Asian communities, which offer specific packages for travel to South Asia and East African countries. Apart from the airline companies — among which Air India and Jet Airways are the most important for travel to India — there are specialized low cost carriers online and road transportation companies (car rental, estate cars for family tours and coaches), all offering various travel options for these families.

Thus, going to temples and houses where different rituals take place is a significant factor in the spatial mobility of Hindu families in Great Lisbon. The abovementioned neighborhoods are set in suburban areas on the outskirts of Lisbon, and although most are either close to the city centre or linked to the centre via main roads, there is a lack of bus routes into town. Driving is therefore the main means of circulation between these areas of the city. Fieldwork provided evidence of the importance of car pools and lifts in response to the lack of public transportation (Cachado, 2012). In the United Kingdom, formal and informal South Asian taxi services are very important, particularly in travel to and from airports. Lifts and informal taxis as alternative sources of mobility can be perceived as creative management of mobility, as Tarrius (1989) puts it.

As in the case of Great Lisbon, Hindu Gujarati families circulating between British cities also move for family and religious reasons. In the United Kingdom, gradual religious integration has led to the slow but steady growth of places of worship and their associated communities (Vertovec, 1991: 124-140). Peach and Gale (2003) refer to a *religious landscape*, a useful concept to help understand the

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2 The first, which is also called Norta by Hindus from Gujarat, is a festival near the end of the Hindu calendar, consisting of nine nights (navratri) of dancing and music dedicated to the female divinity Durga and its manifestations; this is the most awaited festivity in the calendar specially among youths. The Janmashtami, which takes place in the summer (in Portugal and in the United Kingdom), or during the monsoons in India, celebrates the birth of one of the most important divinities of the Hindu pantheon, Krishna. Aside from the specific celebrations in the temple, it includes a parade in the neighbourhood attached to a specific temple (mandir). In it, babies are treated as Krishna and held in a basket over the head, dressed in costumes. Finally, the Holi celebrates the arrival of springtime and retells a myth to strengthen followers' faith. A fire is lit and specific rituals are performed around it, after which celebrants play with coloured dust and water, overturning the usual roles of parent- and childhood. The 'equivalent' celebration in the west is the Carnival.



gradual establishment of places of worship and devotee attendance in the last few decades. Peach's and Gale's study focuses on Hindu, Muslim and Sikh places of worship in the United Kingdom. In contrast with gurdwaras and mosques, it is difficult to know how many mandir exist, since many Hindu families have their own places of worship at home and some houses become actual temples (Lourenço and Cachado, 2012: 63).<sup>3</sup> Many Portuguese Hindu Gujarati families residing in Britain today not only attend one or more temples in the city or town where they live, but also circulate around the country to visit other worship places, organizing family and/or community tours for that purpose. Though less significant in spiritual and territorial terms, this process is akin to what Rana Singh (1993: 240) calls sacred journeys, travelling to India for pilgrimages or *jatra*. Families managing a particular temple often organize excursions, either in the country of residency or to India. In Portugal there is a curious situation, as the Hindu community of Portela also organizes annually coach trips to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fátima.<sup>4</sup>

During one of my field research in Britain (Leicester, May 2009), the family I stayed with undertook a religious tour to Skanda Vale, a complex of temples in Wales, managed by Welsh and English officers. The temples are set in a verdant area and they are prized by Hindu devotees not only because of their natural location but because the rituals and *mantras* are executed there with accuracy rivaled only by renowned Indian temples. It is important to note that devotees' desire for orthodoxy is partly a product of religious nationalism in India and the Diaspora (Assayag, 2001, Vertovec, 1991). Anyway, the Welsh complex has gained recognition among Hindus living in Britain, and there are many organized tours to visit it. There are tours to other temples, such as the grandiose Swaminarayan in Harrow, where there is a large Gujarati community.<sup>5</sup>

In short, when examining the mobility of Diaspora populations, we must take into account all the different kinds of religiously-motivated travel outlined above. But it is important to remember that these pilgrimages are not just about religion but also about breaking urban routines (Shinde, 2009), and reinforcing ties of sociability and family among other reasons. Hindu families move between cities and towns because of varying job and housing opportunities; to visit friends and relatives; and to avoid excessive social control.

Literature shows that networks serve integration needs. The same applies to inter-urban mobility. In my fieldwork I understood that family visits to other towns were often about checking on job and housing opportunities. As Kaufmann and other put it, mobility involves *reversible* and *irreversible* journeys (Kaufman et al., 2004): the former include the daily commute and cyclical tours; the latter are the migrations and their influence on the life journeys of migrating families that migrate.

3 Despite that fact, these scholars estimate there were 109 mandir in Britain in 2001.

4 Devotion to Our Lady of Fátima, an icon to Catholic devotees but also worshiped by the Muslim and Hindu minorities in Portugal, has been observed by Portuguese scholars, but there are no available analysis why this may be the case as yet.

5 The mandir was inaugurated officially on May 31, 2010. Before that, the Swaminarayan held services for local Hindu Gujaratis in a temporary place of worship behind the current mandir.

Traditionally, migration studies have focused on social mobility through employment (employability), while Diaspora studies have focused on religious integration; but these things are happening at the same time and are all equally important, as informants in ethnographic surveys in countries like Britain state, so they should be examined as a whole. An examination of Portuguese Hindu Gujarati urban settlements in Britain and of the journeys that these transnationals entail, provide empirical backing for the theoretical linkages between Diaspora, transnationality, and mobility.

### Portuguese Hindu Gujarati in British cities

Most Portuguese Hindu Gujarati families from Great Lisbon that migrate to Britain have settled in Harrow and Wembley (North London), Southall (South London) and Leicester. Birmingham, Bradford and Southampton, with large South Asians populations, are also possible destinations, but Leicester has been the first choice for many migrant Portuguese Hindu families.<sup>6</sup> Because it has been the preferred destination for thousands of South Asian families in the last decades, there are studies about local Hindu community religious life (Bryant, 1983); on the settlement of migrant populations in the city (Marett, 1989; Andrews, 1995); about the various different communities there (Martin and Singh, 2002); and on Leicester as a model multicultural city (Singh, 1993).

According to Singh, Leicester should be seen as a model of a multicultural city because of its peaceful tolerance today as contrasted with the rampant racism of the 1970s. Economic development and an improved transport system from London have contributed to the constant increase of the migrant population, most notably Hindu Gujaratis. Their labor establishment in the city throughout the last decades has a strong ethnic component, with labor specializations that have not jeopardized the access to work for the populations settled beforehand. The housing ecology in the city would have also supported the current idea of Leicester as a model of a multicultural city, at the expense nonetheless of the difficult access to housing by *overseas* populations. The fear of racism in the 1970s and in the 1980s would have put migrants off registering in waiting lists for low priced housing closer to the centre, pushing them instead to estates that two decades ago could have been considered suburbia. In part, the huge growth of Leicester diluted spatial segregation, since the retail in that city is marked by a continuous urban line between the centre and the estates under consideration.

In British urban contexts as Leicester is, the most available jobs are in the catering industry and small businesses. Contrary to what happened in Portugal until recently, in Britain Hindu women actively seek employment, changing traditional female family roles. Ethnographic observation in Great Lisbon shows that Hindu

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6 More recently, informants have also mentioned Reading, which is 60 kilometers to the west of London, as a new alternative because of job opportunities there.

women are increasingly entering the job market. Informants in Leicester, London and Lisbon sometimes represent this negatively: “in London there is never time for anything”, because of the time taken up by commuting; but the multiplicity of religious associations and cultural opportunities for Hindu families in British urban contexts means that there is a globally positive perspective of the cities and towns they live in. In Leicester alone there were in the mid nineties around eighty Hindu organizations (Andrews, 1995: 77).

In general, informants report that Portuguese Hindu Gujarati families reproduce their pre-migration life-style. There is high social control, a central role for religion, particularly where women are concerned, and heightened ethnic closure. The closure of communities contributes to a *vicious cycle* from which it is hard to escape. One informant described the neighborhoods with a high concentration of Hindu residents as *small shells*, which graphically illustrates the sense of closure. But this view, which was held by a person with high academic credentials (a Masters in Political Science), contrasts with what I have generally observed over the last few years. There have been two particularly notable changes: a growing concern with the low level of educational attainment of girls which contrasts with attitudes of previous generations, and increasing educational and job opportunities for young women; a very positive outlook among Portuguese Hindu families of the British cities and towns where they settle, particularly in terms of access to quality education and jobs.

Clearly, as Bastos (2005) notes, there is a symbolic capital that makes the United Kingdom a preferred destination configured in jobs, housing and education opportunities. In this regard, it is also important to mention a significant *emic* element. Many of my informants, particularly those in Lisbon, say their relatives live in *London* (which includes neighborhoods in small towns in the suburban London (Harrow, Wembley and Southall) and Leicester. London is the key point of reference and is invoked by social actors as if it were a national referent. This means that the theoretical transnational perspectives which typically limit themselves to a national referent to explain the multiple “belonging” of transnationals may not be accurate in all cases. We need to study transnational phenomena not only at a national level but also at an urban one. Indeed, we need studies that combine both approaches. In 2001, Saskia Sassen already suggested that link. Nina Schiller has recently lauded approaches that study relations between migration dynamics and urban growth (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009: 178; 2011). The experience of Portuguese Hindu Gujarati families that live in Britain corroborates this link, and this paper hopes to contribute to increase the number of approaches that combine transnationality with the urban level.

That said, theories of urban mobility among migrants do not have to be revised just because informants use “London” as a label for all British Hindu migration cities; but as recent studies show (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009) and as I demonstrate here, they would benefit from making use not only of the nation state as a point of reference (hence “trans-national”) but also urban points of reference. After all, these populations are as much transnational as they are “trans-urban,” so to speak. This is the case of Hindus in the Diaspora.

Furthermore, people moving from Portugal to the United Kingdom retain their Portuguese citizenship as citizens of the European Union, so destination citizenship policies are not very important in this case. The experience of other transnational populations in Europe shows that the blurring of national borders after the Schengen agreement has reduced the weight of the national referent in transnationalism, and scholars are focusing more on specific aspects of adaptation by transmigrants than on immigration laws. The opening of borders in 2004 for transmigrants from Eastern Europe to northern and southern Europe seems to have contributed as well to diminish the importance of the national paradigm in transnationality studies.

Studies about mobility that focus on transnational populations can transcend the national referent. In sum, the cities and towns where migrants live are significant for migrant life journeys as much as the political context in countries of origin and host states. The growing force of globalization in the last decades has made small territorial units within states more salient (Sassen, 2001). Thus, even though transnationality and Diaspora remain operative concepts in the analysis of Hindu migrations and communities, we need to add mobility to these concepts to understand questions that have been neglected by the anthropological literature on these populations.

In his analysis of the mobility paradigm, Alain Tarrius (1989) notes that transnational movements are not necessarily linked with national referents. Tarrius' anthropology of movement presents a challenge to scholars of mobility and questions the validity of studies that ignore the mobility of social actors, demonstrating how specific groups (ethnic and otherwise) are highly creative when managing their daily and cyclical mobility, and by invoking the dual mobility-temporality (space-time) relationship. Field work shows how important it is for Diaspora and transnationality scholarship to include urban referents in the study of multi-sited communities.

### Final remarks

Some authors, citing Marcel Mauss' *Essay on the Gift*, consider mobility a total social fact. Lévy considers mobility as part of individuals' social capital (Lévy, 2000: 158). Bassand and Kaufmann (2000: 132) argue that spatial mobility should be considered a total social fact as it combines reversible and irreversible movement occurring with specific spatial-temporal horizons.

When discussing social mobility or processes of adaptation during particular life journeys; while debating processes of settlement and/or integration in a host society; or evaluating migrants' access to citizenship, among other issues, one is examining similar processes and the same social actors through different lens. But we should not adopt just one but must rather deploy a multiplicity of perspectives. This is something we are learning from current debates on post-modernity, global cities and the radial growth of cities as well as repeated migrant movements, particularly in the Diaspora. We must not forget the various contributions of urban

studies as they affect Diaspora and transnationality studies. Ethnography, which describes and interprets practices and life journeys, is also indispensable in this domain. Migration scholarship has benefitted from recent studies on mobility, and students of migration, transnationality and Diaspora should take better advantage of them as well. We need analyses of daily life and life journeys that are multidisciplinary and adopt plural perspectives, particularly in two ways: first, Diaspora and the study of successive migrations should be linked with an understanding of territorial and residential mobility, as well as horizontal and vertical mobility in the job market; second, the specificities of the urban contexts in question must be taken on board, as the development of cities, social policies and immigration laws can either deter or accelerate processes of secondary migration.

The above cited study by Schiller and Çağlar accurately points out the *conceptual barriers* that still exist in transnationality studies: “much of migration theory consistently disregards both the social and the cultural divisions within each nation-state, as well as the experiences, norms and values migrants and natives share”. And they add, “scholarship on migrants in cities [...] offers a rich empirical foundation”, and should be exploited fully. I also agree with their view that we can better understand social, cultural and political dynamics if we examine the globalization of cities (Schiller and Çağlar, 2009: 182).

A key aspect of globalization is the international and interurban mobility of Diaspora populations. Researchers who wish to increase socio-cultural insights in Diaspora and transnationality scholarship must acknowledge more clearly the causes of recurrent circulation of families, and thus fill the gaps in the study of what Kleinschmidt (2003) called “people in the move”.

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